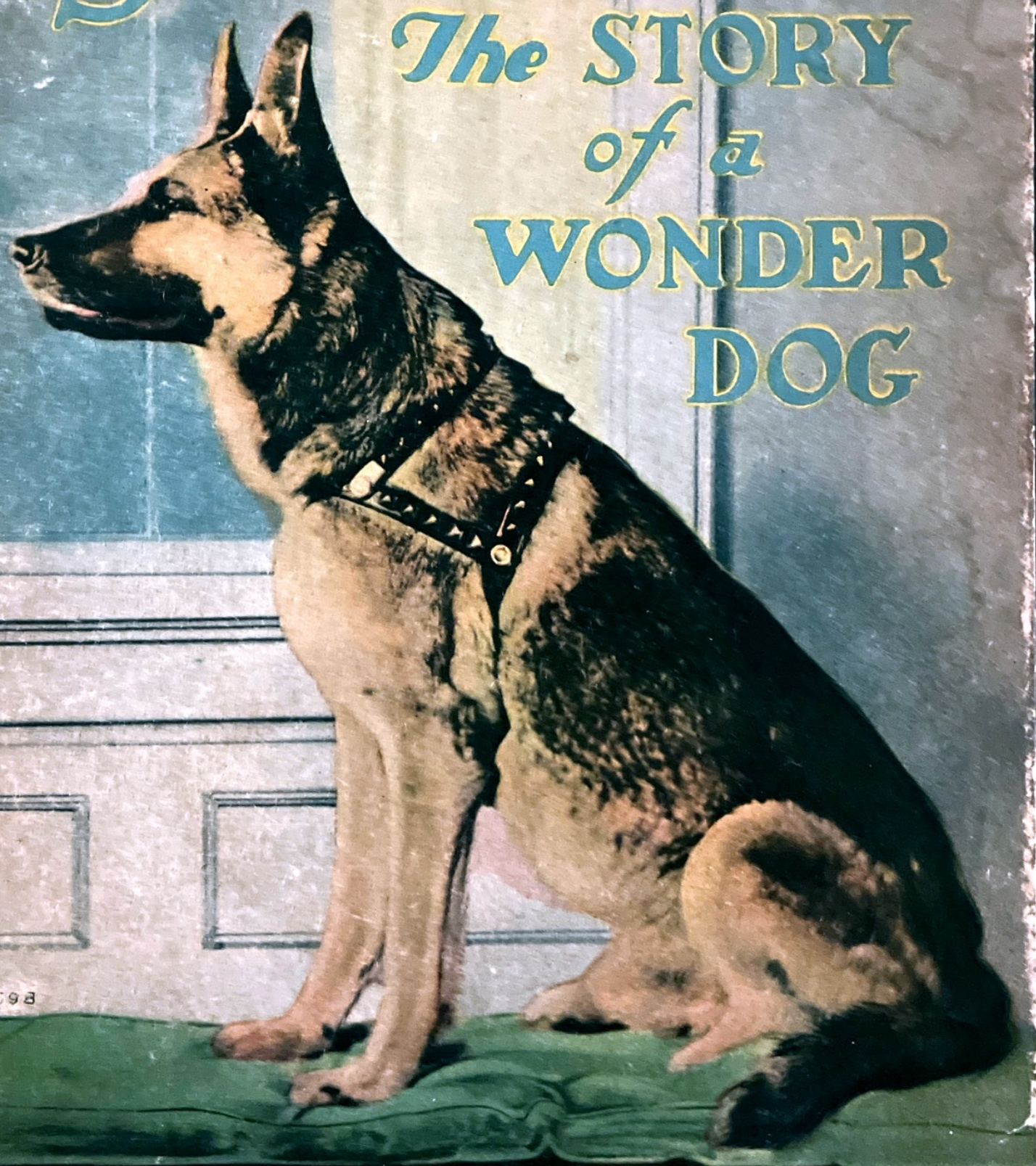


# STRONGHEART

*The* STORY  
*of a*  
WONDER  
DOG



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# Strongheart

THE STORY OF  
A WONDER DOG

By  
*Lawrence Trimble*





# STRONGHEART

## THE STORY OF A WONDER DOG

**S**TRONGHEART was bred and trained by a private breeder in Germany, who was poverty stricken by the war. His inability to even support the dog was the motive that prompted his sale, but rather than accept far larger offers with the chance of his falling into unsympathetic hands, the owner shipped him to a friend in the United States who

### **THEY TRAILED THE OBLITERATED PATHS**

*They trailed the obliterated paths of men who had gone before, and Strongheart was always in the lead. The wild North had a great call for him, it must have brought back to him, wild, primordial instincts of the past.*

owned some well known kennels in which were bred some very fine dogs. These kennels were at White Plains, New York.

So many thousands of his admirers have written to know more about him, what kind of a dog he really is, how he came to be chosen as a motion picture actor, how he was trained and about his personal appearance tour from Hollywood to the Atlantic and back again, that I am going to tell the story and show some pictures of some of his finest scenes.







## STRONGHEART—THE WONDER DOG

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A dog, so far as he feels the necessity, shows every emotion that a human being does, but we have the power in us to show emotions that we do not actually feel, and the dog lacks this. The difference is intelligence.

That fact was the important one in selecting a dog that could be developed as a motion picture star. He had to have the "register," as we say in pictures, feelings and emotions that actual conditions did not warrant. The search was not a short one, nor was the discovery of Strongheart an accident. The search began long before he was born, and it was his ancestry, even more than his own splendid appearance and record that resulted in his selection.

### HIGH ON A GREAT MOUNTAIN PEAK

*High on a great mountain peak, Strongheart gazed down. Ice towered over him, everywhere was the silence of the great North. The dog felt strangely at home, this was life.*

I knew what a dog had to have to make a success in pictures. Jean, the Vitagraph dog, attained a world-wide reputation under my guidance and ownership, and it was the experience of the many years in which I was making pictures with her, that made me turn to the Shepherd dog as the race from which the future film star should come.

The German Shepherd dog, that we here in the United States know as the police dog, has generations of man training behind him. The original breed, taught to use his powers of defense for the protection of helpless domestic animals, had his education gradually extended to doing police and







Red Cross work. Years and years of such close association with men, and constant instruction, has made this breed the most intelligent in the world.

When the time came to select the dog, there were just three in the world that had the qualifications I sought. Of these, two of them had been imported to America, and the third was still in Germany. Although I had never seen any of the three dogs, I know I could have told one from the other if I had suddenly been brought face to face with them all, so thoroughly had I studied their pedigrees and performances.

**THEY PENETRATED A WEIRD,  
LAKE COUNTRY**

*They penetrated a weird, lake country.  
A silent country, with traces of water  
here and there, signs of vegetation.  
Overpowering, masterful, towering  
above them in the distance were the  
snow capped, still menacing, mountain  
peaks.*

In due course Miss Murfin and I made the trip to White Plains to look Strongheart over. My intimate acquaintance with the dog's owner made me disregard the warning not to enter the yard. We had gotten about twenty feet inside the fence when there came a sudden crash of glass and a horrible growl and Strongheart came through a front window, glass and all, and was tearing across the lawn at us—a fearsome sight indeed.

Fearing that Miss Murfin might make the effort to run back to the fence, I shouted, "Stand still." Under the stress



of the moment I said it loudly, distinctly and most earnestly, and it had a very unexpected result. Strongheart took it as a command intended for him—and he stopped still!

Don't misunderstand Strongheart's motive in stopping. It didn't mean that he could be thrown off his object of protecting the property of his master just because the intruder told him to stop. He had heard a command which had confidence in every fibre of the voice that it would be obeyed. I did have confidence that Miss Murfin would obey it, and naturally there was no doubt in my voice at all. Strongheart accepted the command merely as an indication that perhaps

### LADY JULIE, STRONGHEART'S MATE

*Lady Julie, Strongheart's mate. At rest, yet alert, watchful, for danger stalks everywhere. The wild is primitive, and signs of life spells foe to be conquered or to conquer. Or perhaps, it spells food ready for the kill.*

we had a right to be where we were. We had stopped our invasion, were standing stock still, and his opinion was that the situation was such as to permit time for a little investigation. If either of us had moved, I know he would have resumed his attack. His alertness and general air of suspicion told me so.

We stood facing each other for some seconds and then I decided to see if I could not instill further confidence in him that we were all right. I said "Here," and indicated with my finger a position at my right, directly under my right hand. This is the position of a police dog with respect to his







trainer when he is making the rounds of a police beat. Strongheart obeyed the command—not with the same snap and quickness that he would have had for a person he fully trusted, for he approached warily and fully alert and his eyes never left Miss Murfin and myself. He lost no advantage in assuming the new position and therefore was willing to do it.

It was this incident that made me decide that Strongheart was the dog I had been seeking. His own actions had caused his selection. He had shown that his training in the duties of a police dog had been thorough and his execution of

**STRONGHEART HEARS THE CALL  
OF HIS MASTER**

*Strongheart thinks he has heard the  
call of his master and waits tense, eager.*

*You can see the expectant, poised look.  
He is ready!*

them superb. But he was not an automat. His actions were governed by reason. Had he continued in his attack on Miss Murfin and myself after my commands, I would have still have considered him as a candidate for the position of star in our company, for it would have shown a keen conception of duty and adherence to it. Had he quit and relaxed his vigilance on hearing a familiar command, I would have discarded any further thought of him. Such weakness could have no part in the dog I wanted. His adherence to duty was an important trait—but his willingness to be certain of his duty before performing it was superb.

Miss Murfin became his owner that same day, and he was immediately turned over to my guardianship for training for







his motion picture career. Strongheart's police training, while a great asset in his selection, was a positive handicap in his future work as an actor. It gave him the ability to accept commands, but his execution of them was done in the precise, dignified, soldierly manner which is a part of the police dog's training. He could not execute a command except with the greatest seriousness.

My problem was first to teach him to play, for he had no chance when a puppy, for as soon as his clumsy legs were

**AGAIN, STRONGHEART AND LADY  
JULIE**

*Again we have Strongheart and Lady Julie.*

*Here, too, is their master.*

*Resting—It had been a day of toil, of constant pull, a great distance covered. But tired as they all were, there is still an eager curiosity for the marvels of the North, as you can see from this picture.*

strong enough to support his clumsy body his training began and continued without interruption. I used the most popular object of play in the world—a rubber ball. My system was that which is used by any successful kindergarten teacher in the treatment of children, appealing to the likes of a student until the ability of accepting direction has been acquired. Strongheart already would pick up in his mouth objects that he was commanded to. If he had not already learned this I would have taught it to him by taking small bits of any kind of food that I knew he especially liked by experimenting, and giving him the command to take it, when he naturally reached







for it. A dog will readily associate a command in conjunction with something he wants to do, and after a time will wait to do a thing until he hears the command. That is the first step in the training of a dog. Pick out anything he has shown he likes to do. Whenever you see him start to do it, command him to do it, and before long he will restrain his liking for doing this one thing until he receives the command to do it.

For many days I did nothing with Strongheart except to put the rubber ball in front of him and have him pick it up and hand it to me. Then I started placing it at a distance

### THE GENTLE STRONGHEART

*The gentle Strongheart. A different dog, with eyes of love and affection for the babe, second only to the love for the mother who is holding it.*

*Strongheart stands on guard when the babe is left in his care. A proud guard, happy in the trust that has been put in him.*

and giving him the same command and he would go and fetch it. From that it was but a short step to bounce it along the floor and have him chasing it to pick it up.

I had noticed that when the ball bounced past his head that he was the most tempted to abandon his dignity. I took advantage of this fact by bouncing the ball and then taking his paw and hitting the ball hard enough to make it bounce fast, and at the same time giving the rather inelegant command to "Swat it." The first time he hit the ball when I did not have to hold his paw the effect was most laughable. He hit it a mighty blow and it flew back and hit him on his chin, and his dignity was completely shattered.







For a moment the result hung in the balance. He looked at me, undoubtedly expecting swift punishment for having made such a mess of obeying one of my commands. For a minute he was undecided as to which was the most important, to maintain the seriousness and dignity that had been drilled into him from birth, or to obey a command that had such startling consequences. Then he decided to get the ball and his motion picture career really began from that moment.

### IN POLITE SOCIETY

*Strongheart and Lady Julie in polite society. They are ordering their dinner at the Hotel Statler, and careless, happy-go-lucky, as they have been in the North, they are entirely different here, for they are very finicky; and they want exactly what they want, when once again they become civilized and domestic.*

He entered into the spirit of play in swatting and retrieving the ball, but he still lacked one important essential. He would not play unless commanded to. The fact that the country we were in abounded in rabbits furnished me the opportunity of making his play voluntary. I substituted rabbits for the rubber ball in the game of "swat it" and "bring it." There was no possibility in the world of a rabbit remaining still long enough for him to "swat it" and the bringing of one was almost as nearly impossible. The fact that he was never able to complete my commands kept him keen to always keep trying, so whenever opportunity offered, he chased rabbits, first from a sense of duty, but later, because he liked it. He had learned to play.







The rabbits, and especially his fondness for chasing them, provided the means of teaching him not to turn his head. He took part in rabbit hunts with the boys in the neighborhood. I permitted him to stay with the boys, in the front line where all the excitement was, and would give him commands from a position in the rear, possibly a hundred feet back. When he turned his head, I would signal with my hand to come back to me, but never called him. Always when he turned his head he saw the hand beckoning him away from

***THERE COMES A DESIRE FOR THE  
FAR NORTH***

*A wonderful picture of Strongheart. Gone for the time is the wild lure of the North. His brother the Wolf calls no more; in place of it all is the even, smooth, tenor of civilization, of life among men.*

*Sometimes, I think, there comes a strange loneliness and desire for that life of the far North.*

all the fun. It did not take him long to figure out that as long as he didn't look at me, he could still have the fun of hunting rabbits.

There was no intention on my part to make Strongheart a great actor in his first screen production. I wanted to prepare him for playing a natural role. Hal G. Evarts had written a story which he called "The Cross Pull" and Miss Murfin had made a splendid adaption of it for the screen, and the dog in it had to be just dog. It had to be a good dog actor, and when Strongheart had gotten to the point of being good, his first production "The Silent Call" was started.







## STRONGHEART—THE WONDER DOG

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A suitable play for his next picture was not to be had. His first had been a portrayal of dog emotions. The next step would be the reflection of human emotions, accordingly I wrote the story, which Miss Murfin adapted for the screen and was released under the title of "Brawn of the North."

Jack London's great novel "White Fang" has a role for a dog which makes the demand upon him as heavy as any role has made on a human actor. On the completion of "Brawn of the North" we bought the screen rights to this story and were planning on it for his third production. But the public changed this plan and we made "The Love Master" in its place. In writing this story my object was to give him a role more difficult than that he had played in "Brawn of the North" and yet not one that would tax him as greatly as that of the title role in "White Fang."

To have seen "White Fang," which is his fourth production, will be to understand why it was not his third picture when I say that the dog fight could not have been staged if Strongheart had not had the experience of "The Love Master." No real dog will take a licking from another dog until he is physically incapable of making another struggle. In "White Fang" Strongheart had to take a licking from a bull dog. Deep in his heart Strongheart believes that he can whip any dog that ever walked on four legs or less. Before "The Love Master" it had not even been considered possible for him to take a whipping from a bull dog such as Jack London had called upon his hero to take in "White Fang." The production would have been a great one with the fight omitted, but the public by means of letters, clearly showed that they would not be satisfied with any evasion on Strongheart's part in future productions.

"The Love Master" gave him the opportunity of getting acquainted with a great many different animals, and when it was finished he had reached the point where he could restrain himself so that he could take a licking from a bull dog. Then "White Fang" was made and I believe this picture marks the reaching by Strongheart of the pinnacle of acting ability.



The pictures of  
STRONGHEART in  
this book are so  
arranged that they  
can be cut out on  
the guide lines that  
run up and down  
on the inside of  
each picture and  
used for framing.



